Ambient Air Quality in Delhi indicates that the levels of Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) at certain residential and industrial areas have shown increasing trend during the year 2004-05 as compared to the year 2003-04. However, at traffic intersections, there is a decrease of 5% of NOx level during 2004-05 compared to 2003-04. As industry and power generation also contribute to NOx emissions, the increasing trend at certain locations cannot be attributed to the use of CNG in Delhi.

(b) The steps initiated to abate air pollution *inter-alia* include the following:

* Notification of general and source specific environmental standards;
* Identification of sources of pollution;
* Enforcement of auto exhaust standards for vehicles at manufacturing stage;
* Introduction of Bharat Stage-ll and Stage-Ill emission norms for vehicles;
* Introduction of improved Pollution Under Control (PUC) certification system for in-sue vehicles;
* Cleaner fuels and improved technologies for power generation; and
* Regular monitoring for environmental compliance.

Loss of Forest Cover, Mangroves and Wetland

345. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India had lost half of its forest coverage, 40 per cent mangroves and a significant part of its wetland in the past couple of centuries, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the schemes being implemented by Government to save the forest cover of the country, and the achievement made therein during the last three years; and

(c) the total financial allocation for such schemes in the Tenth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The assessment of forest cover in the country is done by Forest Survey of India (FSI) on a biennial basis. The first such survey was done in the year 1987. The forest cover in 1987 was found to be 6,40,819 sq. km. which is 19.49 per cent of the total geographical area. As per the latest "State of Forest Report (SFR)-2003" the forest cover in 2003 is 6,78,333 sq. km, which is 20.64 per cent of geographical area. Similarly, mangrove cover of the country was also assessed for the first time in 1987 and was found to be 4046 sq. km. The latest mangrove cover of the country as per the "State of Forest Report (SFR)-2003" is 4461 sq. km. No separate assessment of wetlands in quantitative terms has been made.

(b) Under the "Integrated Forest Protection Scheme", financial assistance is provided to States and Union Territories primarily for strengthening of infrastructure for protection of forests. The financial assistance provided to States and Union Territories during the year 2002-03 was Rs. 45.82 crores, in 2003-04 was Rs. 24.08 crores and in the year 2004-05 was Rs. 54.06 crores. Similarly, the Ministry is implementing "National Afforestation Programme" (NAP) Scheme for regeneration of degraded forests and in adjoining forest lands during Tenth Five Year Plan. During the last 3 years in the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-03 to 2004-05), 573 'Forest Development Agency' (FDA) projects have been approved to cover a project area of 7.97 lakh hectares.

(c) The total financial allocation in the Tenth Five Year Plan for 'Integrated Forest Protection Scheme' is Rs. 445 crores whereas the total financial allocation in the Tenth Five Year Plan under the 'National Afforestation Programme Scheme' is Rs. 1,115 crores.

Death of lions in GIR Sanctuary

346. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRI VIJAYJ. DARDA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that eight Asiatic lions have died in Gir forest since August this year;